



Volunteers get their feet wet during a watershed monitoring training exercise.

Purpose

Development of a countywide planning document consisting of baseline data for all 20 primary watersheds in Contra Costa County.

Project Goals

- Harness grassroots citizen volunteer energy for a Global Positioning System (GPS) inventory of creek resources and unique watershed features.
- Expand citizen involvement in the development of restoration strategies and priorities for each watershed.
- Facilitate local leadership to develop educational outreach.
- Expose the hidden value of creeks to our communities.
- Identify the potential benefits of enhancing these resources.

Award Amount
\$50,000

Watershed
Multiple Contra Costa County Watersheds

County
Contra Costa County

CALFED Region
Bay Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 7 and 10
State Assembly: 11 and 15
State Senate: 7

Benefits to the CALFED Program

The Watershed Atlas project demonstrates the key role that locally driven watershed groups can play in the CALFED Program's larger effort to restore the Bay-Delta system. The more informed and involved communities and agencies are about local watershed issues, the better they can work together to protect and restore the land that drains to the Bay-Delta. The Watershed Atlas provides comprehensive baseline data, including topography, hydrology, planned land use, detailed GPS data, and social/political boundaries and enhances local capacity by providing a practical and powerful resource for the public, policy-makers, community groups, and resource professionals. It also presents restoration opportunities that demonstrate how local support is essential for long-term success and sustainability.

Project Overview

The Contra Costa Watershed Forum is a partnership organization of nonprofit groups, local governments, environmental education groups, and regulatory agencies called the Contra Costa Watershed Forum. The purpose of the Watershed Forum is to coordinate countywide discussion of, and planning for, creek and watershed issues. The Forum also seeks to identify opportunities for multi-objective enhancements of creeks and watersheds. To that end, the Watershed Forum is developing a countywide planning document called the Contra Costa County Watersheds Atlas and Creek Restoration Strategy (Atlas).

The Atlas project is gathering, assessing, and cataloging existing map-based and statistical data on watersheds and creeks in the county; compiling an inventory of creek restoration projects in the county; developing GIS data for watersheds in the county; and creating both online and paper versions of the Atlas document. The Atlas contains separate chapters on each watershed containing maps, statistics, charts, and text and will ultimately serve as a tool for making watershed management decisions, initiating formal watershed-specific planning processes, and implementing actual restoration projects.

The grant provided by the Watershed Program was used to develop a community GPS creek data collection program to augment the Atlas' baseline data. Implementation of the program entailed training citizen volunteers to follow collection and data evaluation protocols using GPS units to inventory creek resources and unique watershed features. The GPS data collection program not only provided important information on local creeks, but it also expanded citizen involvement in the development of restoration strategies within each watershed. It also facilitated local leadership in educational outreach efforts. Samples of the data are displayed in the Atlas.



Information is gathered for the GPS inventory of watershed features.

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